

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00215 161921Z
ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
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INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
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UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 0215

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, NS
SUBJ: GOVERNMENT COALITION SPLITS; SOEMITA TO BE PROSECUTED

1. NPK COMBINATION PARTNER KTPI'S TWO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT NOTIFIED PRIME MINISTER ARRON BY LETTER MARCH 16 THAT THEY WERE WITHDRAWING THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THEREBY REDUCING NPK TO EIGHTEEN SEATS AND MINORITY POSITION IN PARLIAMENT. MEANWHILE, PARLIAMENT APPROVED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROSECUTION OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND KTPI CHAIRMAN SOEMITA ON CORRUPTION CHARGES WITH 22 VOTES, FIVE OF WHICH CAME FROM THE OPPOSTIION.

2. INITIAL REACTIONS TO DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN LARGELY PREDICTABLE. PRIME MINISTER ARRON SAID IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHO HAS A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, ANNOUNCED A PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MORNING OF MARCH 17, AND IS BELIEVED TO BE CONSULTING WITH THE CABINET REGARDING HIS COURSE OF ACTION. OPPOSITION LEADER LACHMON, WHILE POINTING OUT VHP WOULD UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION IN INSURING PROSECUTION OF SOEMITA ALSO CALLED UPON ARRON'S GOVERNMENT TO RESIGN. PNR LEADER AND MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BRUMA -- STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS UNCLASSIFIED

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IN OFFICE, HAVING NOT BEEN DEFEATED IN PARLIAMENT, AND SAW REMAINING THREE NPK PARTNERS--NPS, PNR, AND CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC PSV--AS NUCLEUS OF CONTINUE COMBINATION.

3. QUESTIONS OPEN NOW INCLUDE FATE OF MINISTER SOEMITA AND KTPI COLLEAGUE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS SOEPERMAN. APPARENTLY NEITHER HAS YET RESIGNED ALTHOUGH ARRON EMPHASIZED THAT A

DECISION WITH RESPECT TO THEIR CONTINUED SERVICE AS MINISTER
WILL BE TAKEN WITHIN A "VERY, VERY SHORT TIME." THERE IS AN
EXPECTATION THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL MOVE QUICKLY TO
QUESTION SOEMITA. SURINAM AWAITS ARRON'S DECISION ON WHETHER
TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO GOVER, EITHER BY AVOIDING A PARLIAMENTARY
VOTE OF PUTTING TOGETHER A NEW COALITION, OR PROCEEDING TO
EARLY ELECTIONS BY DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT. ROLE OF TWO DISSI-
DENT NPS-ERS IN PARLIAMENT PRESENTLY SITTING WITH OPPOSTION
AND OF FORMER VHP-MAN HINDORIE NOW ASSUME PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.
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